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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: KMT CHAIRMAN MA YING-JEOU'S U.S. TRIP,
WASHINGTON-TAIPEI RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their coverage March 22 on KMT Chairman Ma Ying-jeou's U.S. trip; new AIT Taipei Director Stephen Young's meeting with President Chen Shui-bian; the investigation of the alleged 2004 "Soft Coup"; the freeway electronic toll collection system scandal; and other local issues. Almost all papers carried news stories and photos of Young's meeting with Chen Tuesday and Chen's statement that "there will be no more surprises in U.S.-Taiwan relations." The pro-independence "Liberty Times," Taiwan's biggest daily, ran an exclusive news story on its front page with the headline: "The KMT Sells Its Central Headquarter Building [to Taiwan's Evergreen Group] at a Price of NT\$3 Billion." Most papers also reported on Ma's statement at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York Monday that "the Republic of China has been an independent sovereign state since 1912, so there is no need for it to declare independence twice."

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a news analysis in the pro-status quo "China Times" said Ma's remarks on Taiwan's sovereignty status are pragmatic and flexible. An editorial in the pro-independence "Taiwan Daily," however, said Ma's statement deceived the Americans, the Taiwan people, and himself. An editorial in the limited-circulation, conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" said Ma is trying to maintain a balanced position between the United States and China. With regard to Washington-Taipei relations, an opinion piece in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" said Taipei must have a clear strategic goal behind its decision to cease the functions of the National Unification Council (NUC) and the application of the National Unification Guidelines (NUG). The article said Taiwan should not just try to arouse the attention of Washington and the international community but should tell the world what Taiwan really wants. A separate "China Times" news analysis said Chen's remarks made while meeting with AIT Director Young Tuesday indicated that he is making a goodwill gesture to Washington in the wake of the NUC and NUG uproar. End summary.

¶3. KMT Chairman Ma Ying-jeou's U.S. Trip

A) "[Ma's] Discourse on [Taiwan's] Sovereignty Status Is Pragmatic and Flexible"

Journalist Hsiao Hsu-tseng said in a news analysis of the pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] (3/22):

"Speaking in front of a full house of elite American think tank scholars that included former U.S. Ambassador to Beijing Winston Lord and his Harvard University Professor Jerome Cohen, Ma Ying-jeou unavoidably spoke of a discourse that was kept vague while he was in Taiwan. Ma's remarks included: 'the Republic of China (ROC) has independent sovereignty and there is no need for it to declare

independence twice.' Ma guaranteed the ROC's sovereignty and further pledged to the United States that [his party] will work to maintain the status quo of this sovereignty. ...

"Such a position [held by Ma] dodged the 'Taiwan independence' issue that Beijing cares most because Ma insists on 'one China' even though the 'one China' he means refers to the ROC. Ma also recognized the '1992 Consensus,' so Beijing could hardly find fault with him and that also released concerns of the Americans. For the American people who strive for pragmatism in everything, Ma has demonstrated both pragmatism and flexibility. ..."

B) "Ma Ying-jeou's Statement That 'One China' Means 'the Republic of China' Not Only Deceives Americans and the Taiwan People, But Also Himself"

The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" [circulation: 100,000] editorialized (3/22):

"... Frankly speaking, in order to fulfill his ultimate goal of leading Taiwan to be unified by China, Ma is ready to trample on [the Taiwan people's] human rights and deny their right of self-determination. The fact that Ma's accomplice, the pan-Blue camp under his leadership, is opposed to [President Chen's] cessation of the NUC, [the government's] constitutional amendments, [Taiwan's] holding a referendum, and the [U.S.] arms procurement bill, is a clear proof. ... As a result, Ma's constant articulation of democracy and the 'residents' right of self-determination' are all fake, while anti-Taiwan, anti-democracy, and [Taiwan's] ultimate unification [with China] are actually his true color and the only thing he believes in! ..."

C) "Ma's Balancing Act Between U.S. and PRC"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" said in an editorial (3/22):

"... Upon departure to the U.S., the Taipei mayor told the press

that his primary mission was to communicate with various U.S. authorities explaining his and his party's policy on key issues. What Ma didn't mention was a concern that increasingly he has been portrayed in Washington, presumably by supporters of Taipei's ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), as an opposition politician who holds an anti-American stance in favor of improving relations with Beijing. ... For Washington officials, they obviously will not just want to get a face-to-face appraisal of Ma about his U.S. view.

Equally important, they will try to win over Ma and build a close relationship with him in the hope that he will be a Taiwan leader Washington can trust and work with.

"Undoubtedly, Ma is aware of his advantageous position and will capitalize on it to fortify Washington's faith in him and secure its support for him. However, it is unlikely that Ma will allow him to be lopsided toward the U.S., as President Chen has been. Chen in the last two years since the start of his second four-year term has been even more aggressive in trying to work with Washington and Tokyo to forge a triangular military alliance against China. Unlike Chen, Ma will only want to develop a U.S. relationship built on a mutually favorable basis, not targeting Beijing or any third party. ... It's clear that the KMT's potential 2008 presidential candidate is attempting to exercise a delicate balancing act in dealing with Taiwan's most important relations with the U.S. and China. Maintaining such a balance might not be that easy, but this appears to be the best option available to a Taiwan sandwiched between two superpowers and yet looking for a way to survive and prosper."

4. Washington-Beijing-Taipei Relations

A) "Let the World Know 'What Taiwan Wants'"

Wu Rei-kuo, Deputy Director of the Cross-Strait Interflow Prospect Foundation, opined in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 500,000] (3/22):

"New AIT Taipei Director Stephen Young said the current status of the National Unification Council is that it 'has been put into abeyance.' It is evident that there is a gap between the United

States and Taiwan in interpreting [President Chen's] decision to 'cease the NUC functions and the application of the NUG,' and this development has added variables to the bilateral relations between Washington and Taipei. ...

"The focus of the recent debates between the United States and Taiwan did not lie in the 'cessation of the NUC and NUG' itself. Instead, Washington is concerned about whether Taipei will make other surprising or explosive remarks or actions and what it is that Taiwan is really after behind the NUC and NUG uproar. Taipei must have a clear strategic goal and concrete national interests behind its move to 'speak loudly to challenge' [both Beijing and Washington], whether it be to prevent Beijing from expanding its military buildup that sabotages cross-Strait peace and regional stability, or to accelerate the pace for signing a U.S.-Taiwan free trade agreement. Taipei should not just try to arouse Washington's and the international community's attention. It should let the world know 'what Taiwan really wants.'"

B) "In the Wake of the Cessation of the NUC and NUG, Bian Reminds [the United States] of the Favors He Did and Uses Them as a Goodwill Gesture to Washington"

Journalist Lin Shu-ling said in a news analysis of the pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] (3/22):

"When visiting Taiwan's Foreign Ministry Monday, [AIT Taipei Director] Stephen Young publicly used the word 'abeyance' as a new definition for [President Chen's] decision 'to cease the functions of NUC and application of NUG.' But Young merely mentioned the word once and did not talk about it again. Bian, on the other hand, in addition to guaranteeing that there would be no more 'surprises' between Washington and Taipei in the future, proactively mentioned that there used to be only 'Three No's' pledges rather than the 'Five No's' pledges. Bian's move was of great significance because he was akin to telling the United States clearly that he meant what he said and that not only the 'Three No's' pledges that Washington requested, but also the other 'Two No's' that he personally added would remain valid. At the time when the United States is receiving Ma Ying-jeou with a high-profile treatment, Bian's remarks signified that he is trying to compete with Ma and extend a goodwill gesture to Washington.

"Bian was smiling happily when he met with Young Tuesday. In addition to the reasons that the NUC and NUG matter was finally over for the time being, and that Young is an old acquaintance of his, the most important reason is that the Bian administration once judged that Washington might postpone Young's arrival in Taiwan as a penalty for Chen's decision over the NUC and NUG. When it turned

out that Washington did not do so, and Young arrival as scheduled gave Bian the feeling that the NUC and NUG uproar is really over."

YOUNG